



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of February 15, 2010**

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Job Creation

JEFFERSON CITY – This week Gov. Nixon hosted a dinner for senators who are not facing term limits this year to discuss ways to retain and promote a sense of bi-partisanship that has been a defining characteristic of the Missouri Senate the past few sessions. Lawmakers must deal with some serious issues this session, including the difficult budget process, ethics reform and job creation, but we won't accomplish much if election-year politics get in the way of good governing. Governor Nixon stressed the importance of finding ways to create jobs to get our economy moving during his visit with senators this week, and I agree that we must focus on working together to get people back to work.

One important job creation proposal that will soon be debated in the Senate is the Missouri Science and Innovation Reinvestment Act (MOSIRA). This proposal will spur economic growth and create, attract and retain quality jobs related to science and innovation in Missouri. The act has the potential to make our state a national leader in science and innovation by making our state attractive to high-tech companies and other leaders in science and innovation. I am a co-sponsor of this act which was heard in committee this week.

Basically, the measure would use the new growth in state income taxes generated by new employees working in Missouri in designated science and innovation fields and reinvest that revenue in those same areas to create even more jobs. It is important to note that funding for MOSIRA would not come from General Revenue funds.

The act would establish the Missouri Science and Innovation Authority, an independent public body which would work to create, attract and retain science and innovation jobs in Missouri. The eleven members of the board would be recruited from leaders in science and innovation, as well as successful entrepreneurs. The governor would appoint members of the

board, subject to Senate confirmation. With all of the work centered on the Plant Science Center in Mexico, this act will give us some great tools to attract new technology-based businesses to our state.

This proposal is not a slam dunk; we have been warned by a few members of the Senate majority that they will fight this measure on philosophical grounds. However, I hope that political considerations will give way to commonsense when this issue comes to the floor for debate. Missouri citizens are looking to their elected officials for help in creating jobs and getting our economy moving. Our citizens are losing confidence in the ability of Congress to tackle the tough issues of the day due to partisan gridlock in our nation's Capitol, but I remain hopeful that we can avoid the petty partisan bickering that has infected the U.S. Senate. Governor Nixon has worked diligently with both sides during his tenure and he reiterated his commitment to bipartisanship during his State of the State address last month. I sincerely hope the General Assembly continues to heed his call to work together for the good of all Missourians.

This week the House also gave final approval to a measure I co-sponsored rejecting the state tax commission's proposed tax increase on productive farm land. The Senate approved the same measure earlier in the session.

Once again we welcomed a large number of visitors to our Capitol office, including the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents, represented by Kyane Marble and Belinda Brenizer from the Hawkins Insurance Group in Edina, Tricia Jackson from the Melahn Insurance Agency and Tim Wahl with Gallaher Insurance Group, both located in Mexico; Alex Tetlak of Kirksville with the Missouri Bicycle Federation; Ralls County Assessor Tom Ruhl; Mark Campbell with the City of LaGrange; Audrain County Assessor Melissa Maupin and her daughter Dalyne; Prosecuting Attorney Scott Summers of Kahoka; many representatives of the MS Society; members of the Alzheimer's Association; Frank Salter from Hannibal, who visited on behalf of Missouri Chamber of Commerce Day; representatives from the City of Hannibal; and David Eales, Chelsea Luntzford, Heather Schultz and Joanne Bonney of the Monroe County Appeal, Thad Requet of the Shelbina Weekly, and Mexico Ledger publisher Joe May and his wife, who visited our office in recognition of Missouri Press Association Day.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.